

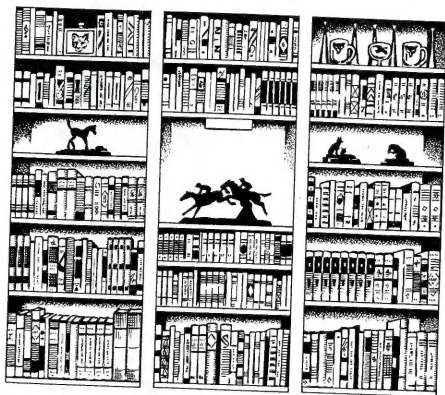
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From the
BROOD - YARD
-- to --
THE PIT



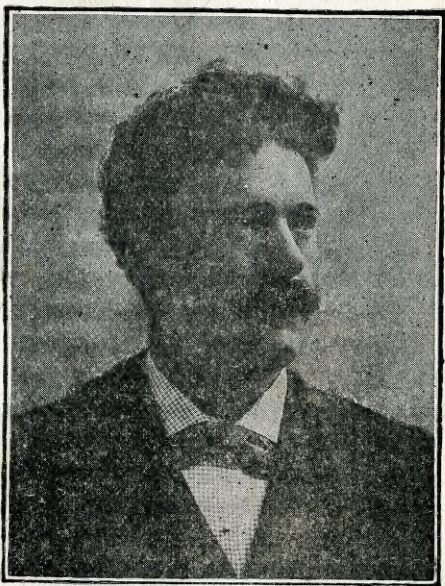
By H. B. (DAD) GLEEZEN

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H. B. (DAD) GLEEZEN

From the Brood Yard to the Pit

--BY--

H. B. (DAD) GLEEZEN

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INTRODUCTION

It has been said that necessity is the mother of invention. That saying is indeed extremely ancient and like our old friend, the traditional Rip Van, has been asleep a great many years. The mother of invention in this modern, down to the minute hustle-or-you-will-get-left age, is the necessity of accomplishing in this short life, about twenty years work in one. Hence it has become absolutely necessary to cut the corners.

I am willing that the reader shall believe that I have taken this short cut to answer the thousands of queries I receive every year, but at the same time I desire that he believe that my motive is not a selfish one, for it is true that my one ambition is to see every lover of a genuine game cock possess the best and have all necessary knowledge pertaining to the rearing, care, condition and fighting of them, hence it is to the entire fraternity that I dedicate this work.

H. B. Gleezen.

INTRODUCTION

The first part of the book is devoted to a general survey of the history of the subject. It begins with a brief account of the early attempts to explain the phenomena of life, and then proceeds to a more detailed consideration of the various theories which have been advanced from time to time. The second part of the book is devoted to a critical examination of the most important of these theories, and to an attempt to show which of them is best supported by the facts. The third part of the book is devoted to a discussion of the present state of the subject, and to an attempt to show what progress has been made since the last time the subject was treated in a book of this kind. The fourth part of the book is devoted to a discussion of the future of the subject, and to an attempt to show what progress may be expected in the future.

W. D. H. 1880

FROM THE BROOD YARD TO THE PIT

Chapter I—Cocking, Ancient and Modern.

The wonderful cocks that my grandfather bred and fought. When but a small lad, or about the time I first began to sit up and take notice of things game-chicken-wise, or to be more explicit, when I used to sneak into an old uncle's cock house and let a couple of his cocks at it for the amusement of myself and a few other young rascals who enjoyed such things. I had to listen and for a great many years to this same old uncle's constant cry, "Oh, those great cocks that my grandfather bred and fought," and they seemed to my uncle's mind to have vanished with the death of his grandfather, for there were none such then, and it was a cause of honest, sincere regret to him. He was a wise man in his way, conscientious and painstaking-

ing, a faithful breeder, a good feeder and an honest cocker, and in the light of what I have come to understand since, I am satisfied that had his old grand daddy been brought back to earth with those wonderful cocks, Uncle J. P. could have given him a right good trouncing with the cocks he then had. I got into the game quite young, almost as you might say through necessity on the part of my uncle; he found that it was cheaper to give me some fowl and let me raise my own than to have me borrowing his and I guess he was right, for as I look back now, I can see that I spoiled many a good cock for him.

As time passed on and I came to know more of game fowl, methods of breeding, etc., I came to question that assertion of my uncle's and one day I said to him, "I have heard you tell of the packets drawn by horses in which people used to ride from town to town and how prior to these packets people traveled horse-

back and how these were replaced by railroad trains; now am I to understand that all of these improvements mean nothing; that all of the advancements that the human family have made up to the present time since the practical beginning, are to count as nothing; or that during all these ages of progression the one thing that has refused to become better or even hold its own is the game cock?" I must have set the old fellow thinking and about this time he got out from the old country a couple of cocks and four hens. These came from County Carlow and were of a strain that he knew a great deal about and had at the same time and had had for some twenty-five years. He obtained these fowl from a man in whom he had every confidence as one of the shrewdest breeders in the old country. When he took them out of their baskets it was plain to be seen that he was disappointed, and I can hear him say, "Why lad, they are not worth a tuppence."

And as compared with specimens of the same strain that he had carefully bred and improved for twenty-five years, they certainly were not. As I am now leisurely traveling down the western slope, there scarcely passes a day that I don't run across that fellow who is bemoaning the fact that there are no such cocks as his grand daddy had.

Too bad that some of those old grandfathers and their wonderful cocks couldn't be brought down to to-day and be induced to do battle with the modern cocker and the modern fighting machine. To be sure they had good cocks a hundred years ago—yes two hundred years ago. There are on record in some of the oldest books written on cocking, some truly remarkable cocks in so far as their ability to win battles went, but it must be borne in mind that then, as now, when a cock wins two, three or four battles in a day, he is meeting cocks vastly his inferior. When two cocks of equal fighting ability,

of equal condition, and properly heeled are set down, the one that survives the battle is certainly in no shape to whip another cock like the one he has just finished. We are altogether too prone as a people to be blinded by the success of our own cocks; we are not apt to carefully measure the worth of the opponent. We enter the pit with a cock and win a clean, decisive battle in one short pitting, our hat gradually creeps up toward the crown of our head and we imagine that is the greatest cock on earth, when, if the other cock had been his equal, the chances were exactly even that we would have lost, and had we won we would have considered that we had just squeezed out of a tight place and that the same cock was just an ordinary performer.

According to history, presumably authentic and believable, such men as Derby and Shefton spent large sums of money breeding their respective strains to as near a degree of

I know, of course, that there are thousands and thousands of men breeding game cocks to-day who are inoculated with that "grand daddy cock" idea, and they are twin brothers to that bunch who number more than a million, who will tell you of the pumpkin pies that mother made. It was the big hungry eye of the boy that made that pie so good, and it is but the child mind that still lingers in the fellow who thinks his grandfather's cocks were so good. I know just how it is; I used to stand at the knee of old uncle J. P. and worship at that throne; I used to conjure up in my childish brain what I would do when I got big enough to wear boots and spit tobacco juice on the snow, and I am willing to confess that it took quite a good many years and not a few hard knocks to convince me that it was an age of progression. There is no such thing as standing still, we must either advance or go back; and go back we do, if we

do not advance, if for no other reason than that the other fellow is progressing.



A Typical White Hackle Cock, Trimmed Out
for Battle.

Chapter II—The Brood Yard.

Luck, condition and a pair of heels never won a main, though seventy-five per cent. of the losers assign this as the reason why the other fellow won. The modern skyscraper of to-day is made possible only through the agency of the steel manufacturers. The successful fighting cock is possible only through the brood yard that is operated by the "down to this very minute" breeder. Success or failure lies in your brood yard and not in your conditioning pen and not in your heels and handling, as many seem to think. Of course, I am willing to admit that there is a lot in heeling and handling particularly so when one sees, as one often does, the real fighting cock defeated by the "dub" in the hands of a tricky handler who understands the art of doping the other cock by means of

"rub" used on his own. But this is another story which I will tell later on.

Any one possessed of a game strain of fighting fowl can improve and bring that strain to as near a state of perfection as human ingenuity enables us to accomplish all modern improvements.

In the beginning there is one prime essential other and apart from game-ness and ability to fight, vigorous health. You must have healthy, strong, vigorous stock to start with, and you must have proper surroundings. Your brood house must be situated on an elevation. The soil, preferable, should be a loose gravelly one. Your exposure should always be to the south, and no matter what latitude it is situated in the front should always be open; there should never be any glass windows, but cloth curtains can be used to prevent the drifting in of snow in winter. Never use any artificial heat. The yard or range in which your fowl are

to run should conform as nearly to free range as possible. In short there should be 200 square feet of space provided for each bird. Or if you are breeding four hens and a cock your yard should be 50x20 feet. Just as much larger than this as it is possible to make it is just so much better for the fowl and just so much better for the future generation. Large brood yards mean more eggs, larger eggs a higher per cent. of fertility and strong vigorous chicks when the eggs are hatched.

In setting forth the type of brood fowl I shall picture to you such as will conform to the requirements of all styles of fighting under any and all kinds of rules and in any form of heel that is made to tie on a game-cock. The cock that heads your yard should be built from the ground up, small feet, slim toes and nails, prop-toe set well back, spurs set well down to the prop-toe, the lower the better. For the cock that carries the low heel is the bloody heeler,

unless he is of that particular family of so-called game cocks that fight with their knee joints and wings and have to be heeled with a heel three inches or more in length in order that they may at all touch the other cock with their gaff. The shank should be short, small, finely moulded, with a tendency to squareness rather than roundness. Right here is a point where men talk about bone, and it is astonishing the number of breeders who are inclined to the big shank fowl, absolutely deceiving themselves with the idea that they have a strong bone cock if they have one with a big shank. No greater fallacy was ever harbored in the brain of man. The thigh should be long and hinged well down on the body; here is a point which is overlooked to a great extent. Some cocks that have the appearance of having a very wide back have the thigh joints set so high on the frame as to give them a false width of back and this is indeed a serious defect,

as it shortens the reach of the fowl and particularly so if he is of deep keel. This is a type of fowl which should always be avoided. He should be shallow from back to keel, flat of breast, with plenty of width below, broad across the shoulders even to that extent that when standing erect he will be a trifle wedge shaped, but the width of the back must be sufficient, so that he will not present a flatiron shape. The wing must be long and carried well down at the tail. The tail should be abundant, well sickled and carried not too high. However, this appendage is not of vital importance, as we never tie a gaff on a cock's tail. The neck should be thick, strong, tapering, spreading out well where it joins the body. The wing muscles should run well up to the neck and should be thick and well developed. The head should be rather short, rather broad, the beak should be stout, well curved and short. The eye, no matter what its color, should be bright and flash-

ing. In disposition the cock should be peaceable, seeking battle only with his natural enemies, at the same time he should not be retiring in the presence of man, but should rather be one of those fellows that trots down to meet you when you come to his yard, and when taken in hand should always chatter and talk to you.

This same discription applies to the hen in a general way; if she happens to be a spurred hen the spur should be set well down, and while it is essential for her to be broad across the shoulders, she must have a good breadth of back, sufficient at least to prevent her from appearing flatiron shape. Tail should be carried well up, at least at an angle of forty-five degrees, and in disposition she must be alert, always busy, for the sluggish, dull hen will never get fast fighting cocks. As the hen is the all-important part of your brood yard, you cannot afford to overlook even the slightest detail in her make-up,

and her breeding should be absolutely known to you. Her father should have been a fighting cock of known ability, her mother should be a true game hen, her brothers should be performers of merit and she should be bred by a man whose love for a genuine game fighting cock exceeds his love for the almighty dollar.

As to color, that is merely a man's fancy. But it is a fact that fowl of extremely light colors are most susceptible to disease and less vigorous than their black red and brown red brothers.

Always avoid cross bred fowl for your brood yard. The nearer true in blood your fowl are the more uniform will be the progeny and the greater your success in the pit. Also it is well to avoid that strain of fowl on which it is necessary to make a cross every few years in order to retain size and stamina.

The modern fighting machine, the true gamecock of to-day, is plenty in the land. There is also an over-

abundance of the other kind, hence it is well to proceed slowly when seeking new blood. The modern fighting machine is a valuable piece of property; such fowl are not hawked about for a few dollars. Men who have them know their actual value and insist on getting it when they part with them, and it is well to remember that a man who sells \$20 gold pieces for six bits, stays not long out of the insane asylum.

The average man pays from \$100 to \$1,000 for fowl before he obtains that which comes anywhere near suiting him. The natural inclination of the beginner is to buy something because it is cheap, hence his education is an expensive one and he learns only by hard knocks. But we are all alike and it was ever thus. It is best, when possible to do so, to visit the breeder from whom you intend to purchase and make your selection. This is a wise thing for more than one reason; first you will be able from actual observation to

determine whether he is a breeder or dealer in second hand clothes. If you are at all a student of human nature an hour's visit with the man will bring out enough of his character to show you whether you want to trust him or not, and last, but not least, you will have the satisfaction of selecting such fowl as suit you.



Chapter III—The Conditioning Pen.

The importance of suitable quarters for ordering a main of cocks is not only under rated by the majority of feeders, but, owing to conditions and the natural enemies of the game, impossible in ninety out of a hundred cases. Suitable and well equipped quarters are as essential as the cocks themselves. No matter how good a main of cocks you may have you cannot properly condition them in a cold, damp cellar, or some out of the way ill-ventilated shed. I am a strong believer in having the cage before you get your bird, then if you are fortunate enough to get a good bird you have a good place to keep him.

Not only in the majority of mains is the condition not what it should be, but the birds themselves are woefully lacking. The prime causes are

poor breeding and poor walks. I might say, perhaps, and even with more truth, the absolute worthlessness of the brood stock. While good cocks with poor condition are of little value towards winning a main, poor cocks and poor condition are what donate your money to the other man.

In making a main always give yourself sufficient time to coop walk your cocks under your personal direction for at least two weeks before their actual keep commences. They should be brought in from their walks and put in these coop walks, each cock carefully weighed and examined, and right here the culling process should commence. Thin, starved cocks should be thrown out at once, as should all cocks that are over-fat, that is to say, a cock coming off his walk weighing 6-8, that you know can fight at 5-4, should be thrown out, because it is useless to attempt to get that cock to prime flesh in anything short of

two months time. To be sure he could be starved to weight in a few days, but he would be worthless and would lose, whereas, if properly brought to his weight, he might be a top notch cock. Now that you have selected all of your cocks that are in prime flesh, look carefully to any imperfections that will count against you in the pit. Never use a cock that has more than one feather broken in the flight feather of wing, or a cock with a badly broken tail that you know normally carries a heavy fan. Never use a cock with bad feet; cut out the slip leg, unless your heeler is an expert at heeling a slipleg cock and never use a cock that you know has been through a long siege of roup or pox, no matter how prime his flesh may feel, he will fool you when you get him into the pit and nine times out of ten lose for you. Immediately as you have them selected and in their coop walks, start in with a diet that will build up those that are a shade under

and bring down those that are a shade over. For the former give a morning feed of steamed cracked corn, nine parts to one part of chopped raw, lean beef. Evening feed give old, well seasoned corn. To the latter give a morning feed of steamed oats and an evening feed of corn; the evening feed should be fed two hours before dark in deep litter. Clean, fresh water should be kept before them all the time.

Weigh your cocks every other day, increase or decrease the feed as it is necessary. At the end of two weeks they are ready for the conditioning pen. For cocks the keep should be eight days, for stags seven days. The best possible feed to use during the keep is a good cock bread, and this should be their sole and only diet, and should consist of such ingredients as nature intended a cock should eat. At least one-half the cocks in this country that go through a so-called method of conditioning are fed on stuff entirely foreign to

their nature, they are dosed with different drugs, put through a physicing process, all of which only helps the other man to defeat them. It is almost beyond belief, the stuff that some men will put into a cock under the theory that they are getting him in condition to do battle. Why, if race horses were treated in a like manner we would not have anything outside of the three minute class. It would be just as sane to give a race horse a quart of jalap as it would to give a cock a dose of calomel. If a man were given the same proportion of calomel according to his weight, that I have seen some men give cocks he would not live fifteen minutes.

In working cocks the scratching coop, swing and wheel are preferable to hand work as it is almost impossible to give a cock the amount of work he really needs by hand without making him sore, for every time you flip or run a cock you twist the

feathers in their flesh sockets which not only weakens them but sets up an irritation which in time causes fever, sores the cock, makes him irritable, and in fact tends to get him out of condition instead of in. The best scratching coop is one made of wire netting two feet wide, six feet long and two and one-half feet high. They should be set on a floor well covered with sand and six inches of litter in each coop, and it is always best where you have the room to have as many coops as you have cocks to condition. These coops should be set at least two feet apart and the cocks should be taken out of their stalls at daylight in the morning, put into these scratching coops, and a little grain should be scattered around outside of the coops and a few hungry hens to pick it up. This will start the cocks to work, and they should have at the beginning of the feed at least one hour of this exercise; this should be extended to at least two hours on the

sixth day; on the seventh day they should be rested as they fight on the eighth. They should be taken out of these scratch coops and put into their stalls for at least fifteen minutes before they are fed. This process should be repeated late in the afternoon, timing yourself so that their work is finished about dark. They should then be put into their stalls where they should rest for at least one hour, then turn on your lights and give them their supper. They should have artificial light for at least one hour each evening. If you use the swing or wheel they should be put through this exercise during the middle of the day; make the work light at first, gradually increasing, three to four minutes on the swing at the beginning increasing to not more than ten minutes on the sixth day.

Another prime essential is absolute cleanliness. Stalls should be thoroughly cleaned and renovated before each main and all feed cups

and utensils should be boiled out at least once a day. The water used for the cock's drink should be boiled and set away to cool.

The feet and legs should be kept thoroughly clean and on the first day of their keep should be gone over with a sponge moistened with olive oil. On the morning of the seventh day their legs should be washed in a warm solution of three parts of water and one part vinegar. Each cock's stall should be provided with a perch about one and a quarter inches in diameter raised about six inches from the floor and the floor should be kept covered with clean, dry saw dust.

As to the amount of food, this is governed wholly by the size of your cock and his ability to assimilate it and throw it off. He himself regulates this by the amount of work he does. Watch your cocks closely and never feed more than they will throw off between feeds.

Don't use your cock house for a lounging place; don't allow the committee of forty-seven to tell you how to do your work; don't make a smoke house out of it; don't keep a booze bottle in the empty cock stalls; don't tell all your friends which your best cocks are and which are your poorest and don't invite the whole town in when you spar them; in short, it is your business to condition the cocks and don't let your business get beyond you.



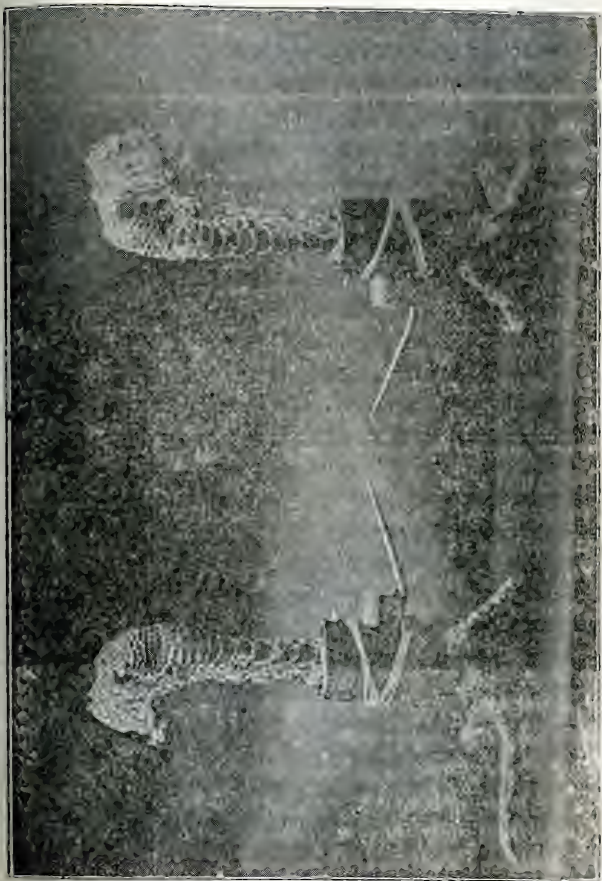
The White Hackle Cock Heeled for Battle

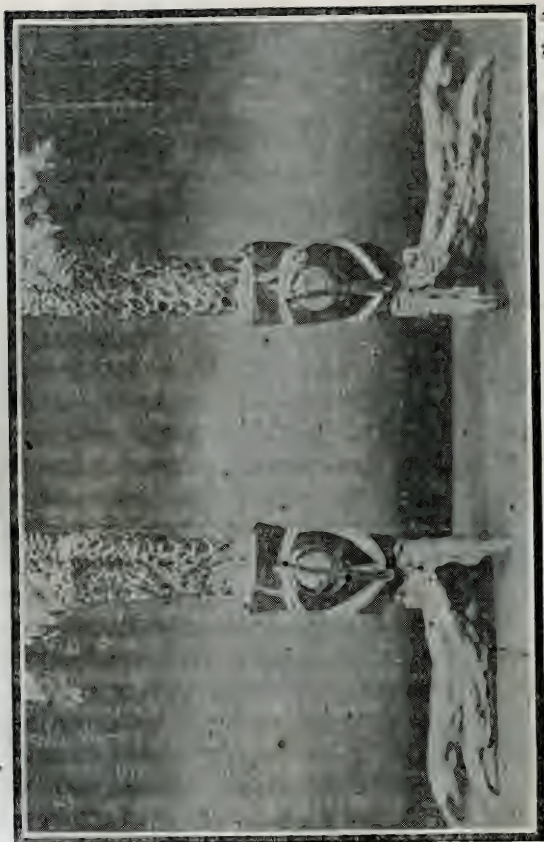
Chapter IV—Heeling and Trimming.

To successfully heel cocks one must know the fowl and their style of fighting. Given this, a steady hand and a good eye will do the rest with but very little experience, as the modern gaff comes to you properly leathered and set so that all that is necessary is to have the top of the edge of the leather, when extended, at right angles with the run of the shank. In a small percentage of cocks there are minor details to be taken into consideration. These are principally a deformed natural heel. Some grow down too much, some in and some out too much; so much so, in fact, that if the padding was equal all around the heel, your gaff would point anywhere but in the right direction. In heeling a cock for a deformed heel, say one that is turned ahead too much, the padding should

all be on the back side of the stub: this will throw the point of the gaff back where it should be.

The illustrations accompanying this article show the proper method of attaching the gaff. The pair of legs are from a normal cock, the stubs growing true. In No. 1 is shown a side view, which shows the approved method of winding the leather and tying the string. No. 2 shows the proper set of the gaff. In both of these illustrations an inch and a quarter gaff is used. No. 1 is New York regulation; No. 2 is a front drop. In using a longer gaff the point carries out in proportion to its length. You will observe in No. 2 that the legs have been reversed, the right leg being on the left of the picture. This was done for convenience in photographing. The packing for both the stub and winding of the leg should be a strip of chamois skin. The packing on the stub should be sufficient to hold the heel rigid when pushed on as this lessens the liability





of cramping the leg, as you do not have to draw the string so tight to insure the gaffs staying where it is set. Three thickness of chamois around the leg are sufficient; never more than four should be used, as the gaff should set as close as possible to the cock's leg. This increases the accuracy of his blow and also the power of it, as the more swing he has the harder he hits. One can readily understand this, who has seen cocks fought in both inch and a quarter and three inch gaffs, as there are twenty broken bones in inch and a quarter heels to one in three inch heels.

Never hurry when setting a pair of gaffs, or allow yourself to be hurried, or converse with anyone except your assistant who is holding the cock; in fact your cock house should have room only for yourself, your assistant and your cocks. Never make a lounging place of it. You may temporarily offend some would-be-friends but they will get over it.

The cock's natural heels should be sawed off at the time he is picked up from his walk when you have made your main. It is essential to do this then as the stub contains a nerve which is quite sensitive, remaining so for several days after it has been cut. The proper length is one half inch from the leg. Never cut them longer than this, or shorter than 7-16.

Your assistant should be a man familiar with fowl and one who will attend strictly to business, and while he will handle the cock gently, must hold him firmly while you are setting the gaffs. When you have one gaff set, let your assistant stand the cock on his knee from thirty seconds to a minute before you proceed to set the other gaff, as this relieves the strain on the cock, which to a nervous cock is very trying, as the majority of cocks do not take kindly to being held in a fixed position.

Before you heel your cock, you must trim him out; this varies according to the rules under which you

are fighting. If the cocks are to be hackled, the hackle should be clipped evenly all around from the shoulders to the crown of the head, and that you may give the other man no advantage, do not leave it over one-half inch in length. The cutting of the wing is very important. If hackled as above it must be shorter than as if the same cock were fighting in full hackle, and the shortest length is carried where inch and a quarter heels are used. The longer the gaff, the more sail you must carry, as with long gaffs it is quite important to get as high as possible at the outset. The cutting of the wing is also determined in a measure by the style of fighting of the cock, which you determine when sparring them out. Be sure and not leave anything of this kind to memory, have each cock numbered and make an entry of all these things in a book which you carry with you at all times; in short, do not guess at

anything, and by all means do not confide to anyone these points with a view of having them help you remember them. These things are valuable to the conditioner and the heeler and he should trust no one with them. The cock's tail is the rudder by which the ship is steered; all of the secondaries should be removed, cutting them up about one inch from the quills, as this acts as a brace to the fan. The cutting of the fan should correspond to the length of the wing; as an illustration, if the flight feathers of the wing are not cut the fan should not be cut. If the average cut in the wing is two inches, the fan should be cut just half this amount, or one inch. In trimming out behind do not cut too close, leave the feathers at least one-half inch. The heavy fluff surrounding the thigh should be well sheared out, never cut anything off the breast or keel. In cutting the saddle, commence down on the hip, running

back to the oil sack, having the saddle present a wide V shape when trimmed.

Your heels should be kept absolutely clean, and should be examined after each battle, and in your outfit you should have a small oilstone with which to touch up the points if they become dull. In your kit you should have a surplus of everything needed to carry on your work. Never borrow anything if you can avoid it. Provide yourself with plenty of soft, linen string for tying on the gaffs and don't wax it, for with a waxed string you can never tell how tight you are tying the gaff, while with an unwaxed string you can tell to a nicety.

Now you are all heeled and ready to go to the pit. Give your cock one dip of clean, cool water. This is far superior to fruit of any kind and it does not interfere with saliva or tend to gum up the mouth or throat as does fruit. Particularly bad is the orange, which is most commonly

used, as the combination of sugar and acid in this fruit acts on the saliva in such a manner as to fill the mouth and throat with a foamy substance as soon as hard breathing takes place.

Chapter V—Handling.

A cool head, good eye and steady hand are the prime essentials in the pit. The successful pitter must be both blind and deaf to everything but the work in front of him. Pay absolutely no attention to any conversation directed to you, and no matter what takes place, never take your eye from the cocks and the other handler. Many an otherwise good handler is easily rattled and especially at critical stages and right here is where you can lose a fight that belongs to you on a technicality. Always time yourself so as to get into the pit with the other handler; should he show a tendency to keep you waiting hand him back a liberal dose of the same medicine the next battle and he will be pretty sure to cut it out. If you don't know your opponent and have never handled

against him before, study him well and try him out the first battle. You can then map out your campaign for the balance of the battles. If he shows an inclination to beak the cocks an unnecessary length of time, make up your mind that he is a little shy on the light, and thereafter don't give him but two or three bites. If you happen to have a vicious cock in the first battle, hold him well under the other cock, letting the other cock do the beaking and manage if you can to let your cock take a bite of the other handler's hand; watch him closely at this stage and see if he is inclined to be nervous. When through beaking it is important to set your cocks as quickly as possible; never let the other man get his cock down first, for if you can catch the other cock before he is fully set, you have the advantage of the first wallop. Never hover over the cocks while they are fighting and insist that your opponent keep clear. The referee will

always back you up in this. Also watch that your opponent when the cocks are fast, does not approach in such a manner as to hide the referee's view. This is important through all stages of the counting as the referee should have an opportunity to see absolutely if the cocks are showing fight.

When the cocks are fast, get to them instantly and watch closely that the opposing handler does not injure your cock. Never take the count when your cock has the best of it, in fact, never take the count until you are reasonably sure that the other cock will not show again. As long as your cock has the other cock going, the more he can cut him right then and there, the quicker he will stop him or kill him. This is a very important point, for many times a badly damaged cock when given a minute's rest has one wallop left that will put you down and out. If you are fighting under rules where your opponent can count for both

cocks and, desiring to rest his cock, counts for you, immediately claim the count, and count your cock down as rapidly as possible, giving your opponent the shortest possible rest.

When it is your cock that is going down first from severe punishment lose no opportunity to count him up and nurse him. To skillfully nurse a badly injured cock and get another kick out of him seems to be an art possessed by but a few men. It is not only laughable, but remarkable, the antics some handlers will go through. I have seen a 200 pound man place a badly injured cock on the floor of the pit and put almost his entire weight on him. I don't know what he thought he was doing, but I do know that he was helping the other cock win. A severely cut cock should be handled with the same delicate touch that a skillful physician handles a new born babe. He should be taken up with both hands, one on either side; with the little fingers catch the feet

and draw them carefully up under him and rest him in this normal, easy position. If under rules which allow it, sponge his head with a solution of one part whiskey to nine parts water. When you are ready to set him down do not release his feet until just ready to stand him on them. If he is blinked, always give him his good eye to the other cock, unless you have reached that stage of the count where you come to a breast, then breast him if possible with blind side on, this is essential if you know the other cock will fight back when struck but will not make fight without it.

In case of a severe couple little can ever be done. You will see men try to pull cocks apart, trying to reduce what is termed a couple. If what they believe took place really had taken place it would be a mere matter of pushing the joint back into place with your thumb. What is commonly termed a couple, where a leg is affected, is caused by a severe

blow at the nerve center on top of the back, which causes paralysis of one side, and occasionally both sides. Sometimes if the blow is not severe the cock will work out of it. The only assistance that you can give is to rub the back, stroking with an even pressure toward the tail.

Wry neck is another injury almost impossible to assist. The blow that causes it is delivered near the base of the neck and is an injury to what might be termed the spinal cord. You gain nothing by stretching the cock's neck out, but you can sometimes help it by rubbing gently with the thumb at the base of the neck letting the fingers support the under side where it joins the breast, and work your thumb around with a gentle pressure

Broken bones are also a tough proposition. We occasionally see a cock win with a broken leg or wing. All else being equal it is ten to two that the cock with the broken wing

loses, and ten to one that a cock with a broken leg loses. There is nothing gained by tying it up or by cutting it off, though you will often see this practised. All that you can assist your cock is in setting him and steadying him all you can. If it is permissible or the other handler does not object, steady your cock until the other cock is within striking distance. When your cock is down on his back, always turn him onto his broken wing. If he is a cock that is willing to fight at every opportunity, and you watch closely, when doing this, the position of the other cock, it often happens that you can get a good blow in this way, usually under the wings where it will do some damage.

If it is a case of a broken leg, always lay him on that side and as far away from the other cock as possible. If he is a cock that will reach up and bill and then kick, you have a small chance of winning. In the case of a broken leg or wing and

your opponent cannot punish a down cock, your aim should be to prolong the battle as much as possible, that is of course if you know you have got a game cock that will claim until dead, for oft times the other fellow gets tired and quits his job, even though not badly punished.

In case of a throat cut, try to rub the blood down into the crop. If you can do this, you can get a lot of fight out of your cock. If it is a lung cut, get it out of him as fast as possible, by what is termed the sling-ing process, give him a rapid side motion with sudden stop, which will usually eject it.

The instant you are satisfied that you have no show to win a fight give the fight to your opponent by handing him his cock. Be graceful about it, tell him what a nice cock it is, and how you wished you had a main like him. He may not return the compliment, but you will have the crowd with you.

Always see your opponent's cock weighed and examine the heels used to see that they conform to the rules. Do not leave this to your assistant; this is your business—attend to it yourself.

Chapter VI—Crossing

Since man first shed his tail he has searched for the unattainable. Perhaps he did before that time, but as my knowledge extends back only to the shedding period, cannot say. In no walk of life is this characteristic portrayed more strongly than among cockers. It seems that twenty-two out of one-hundred cannot resist to temptation to breed from a sensational winner no matter how obscure his breeding may be. It is a thousand to one shot that every one of these sensational cocks has no lineage whatever, but is simply the result of a cross. Right here, how few men know what this term was intended to imply. The majority believe that it is the mixture of many bloods. A true cross

is the breeding of one pure strain on another; the result of this is many times very satisfactory, providing that both families are exceptionally good, for the progeny will hark back to both sides. Thus, if your hens are of a very ordinary fighting strain in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred the cocks will be very ordinary fighters, while if the cock is an exceptionally good one a few will take after him, and vice versa. If both are exceptionally good and the progeny proves it, hold what you have. It is only a question of breeding back to both sides, a son back to the mother and daughters under the father. In this way you intensify rather than detract from the good qualities. If one side is bad and the other good by this method of breeding you simply multiply the bad qualities on both sides. If the breeder would only hew to these lines until he had absolutely proven the worth of his fowls there would be a hundred good strains in this country

to-day, where there is only one. But ninety-nine have the crossing mania and will cross these cross-bred fowl on another strain, and it matters not how good the first cross may be or how good the third family, disaster surely will result from the second cross, for you will simply smother the good qualities of the three strains, and, being disappointed, crosses again, as he terms it, instead of going back to the original stock and trying in an intelligent way to breed this up to a high standard. These breeders will offer as an excuse for their continual crossing that intense in, or line-breeding destroys size, stamina and bone. No greater fallacy was ever harbored in the brain of man, for by judicious selection of brood stock a strain may be built up in all of its brood qualities by an intelligent method of line-breeding. But to successfully do this man must love his fowl and have an interest in the work, and he has got to be something more than

a mere gambler on the result of a cock fight.

While game cocks and cocking are rapidly multiplying in this country, it is becoming more and more difficult to obtain pure strains. This is wholly due to the crossing mania. I would suggest that any reader having a doubt of the truth of this obtain a circular from every breeder who issues one, and in the great majority he will find, where the family history is given, that the man is offering cross-bred fowl for sale. I do not mean that it is impossible to establish a strain by the mixture of two or more bloods, but I do contend that it takes three times seven years to bring this strain to a state of perfection, and when this is accomplished your strain will not be of many colors, like Jacob's coat, but the color will have become fixed to some one standard, and it will be noticeable that the fighting qualities will improve and follow the color

standard to some fixed type. No man can truthfully say he has a perfect strain until the color becomes uniform.

When cocking was lawful in the British Islands, cockers of note, who held their own on the sod, all bred to a fixed type and color. The prominent strains, in fact the noted strains, were the Black Reds, Brown Reds and Pyles. There were of course grays, blues, duns and soots, and yet others; the result unquestionably of crosses by those seeking to make a strain yet better than the winning strains of their time. But none ever approached the prominence of the black reds and brown reds. The careful follower of cocking in this country cannot fail to observe that the great winners in the pits of this country are the black and brown reds.

By this I do not mean that a cock should be black or brown red in order to be game, a fighter or a cut-

ter, but I do think that these two colors are bred nearer to type and standard than any others in this country. One reason is that they are harking back to their pure progenitors of the British Islands, from whence this country originally obtained the best stock ever brought to these shores. What a change a hundred years has wrought, yes even fifty years. Now instead of importing brood stock from the old country we are sending the English and Irish cocker his brood stock. I believe the prime reason for the deterioration of pit fowl in the old country is due to the strict enforcement of the laws there, and not that our brothers across the pond love the game cock less than their forefathers. But being able to fight them only in the most limited way, the breeding has been confined to such a small compass that the opportunity for retaining, to say nothing of improving, their stock has been almost nil.

There seems to be sort of a revival over there, as a constant stream of inquires are coming to this country for brood stock, and let us hope that we may again see the old time cock fights on Derby Day.



Chapter VII—The Would-be Breeder

The successful cocker is a builder; the successful builder uses good material; good material can always be purchased at a price, and law of supply and demand fixes price according to quality. Perhaps this is less true in this business than in any other. However, what a man produces he will usually sell. There may be instances of cockers who are true fanciers, who will refuse to part with any of their fowl at any price. But if you will follow these people closely in the pits you will note that their strain is greater in their own estimation. The mere fact that a man will not sell his fowl does not make them good, neither does it make winners of them.

It is to-day more a question of perfecting what we have than producing something new. The strain that is an absolute success does not

exist. While in recent years there have been a few so-called new strains springing into prominence, it has been mostly at the expense of printer's ink, and when washed out they proved to be simply a cross of some prominent strains.

Contention always has and always will exist between buyer and seller, and to a greater extent in this line, perhaps, than in any other, this being due to the fact that the sport is unlawful. The bulk of the complaints are traceable to one thing only, i. e., ignorance. Ignorance on the part of the breeder who knows the quality of his fowl neither as to gameness nor as to fighting ability. Somebody hears that somebody sold a game cock for \$25. That makes him see easy money; he straightway looks around for some game chickens, gets hold of one of the journals and proceeds to hunt up the man that will sell to him the cheapest, buys a few fowl or eggs and the next year

he is right in line with either Mr. So-and-So's undefeated Ringtail Snorters or his own private strain which have won 90 per cent, in his hands and his customers in the last 20 years. He is wise enough to know that a good display catches them, and his advertisement falls under the eye of another Mr. Somebody who is looking for easy money. These fellows may be honest, I don't doubt but that they are. They believed the fowl they bought were game and they think they have every right to sell them as such. They know nothing about fighting or testing a fowl, therefore have no means of determining just what they have got.

In the course of time some of these fowl fall into the hands of men who will fight them, and a good cutting or a broken bone makes them long for the shade of the old apple tree, and straightway there is a howl. Mr. Man who fought them claims he

was robbed, and Mr. Man who sold them contends it could not be possible, and he, having advanced far enough in the game, tells the purchaser they were not in condition. Perhaps, if a little further advanced, he will set up the theory that they were cut in the genital organs. If he has been at it quite a few years and got to be a real wise guy, he will ask to have the cock returned to him for examination and in course of time the purchaser will receive a letter stating that the cock was dissected and that a large nail was found in his intestines. Fact is I have heard of cases where almost everything from a ten-penny nail to a wheelbarrow has been found inside of a gamecock that ran away. All of this trouble on the part of the purchaser who buys cocks to fight is but a gentle zephyr compared to the hurricane that the breeder of real gamecocks has to go through when he sells a good cock to some kid who

doesn't know the difference between a game cock and a guinea, and really you can't blame the kid, for he has been reading about the great strain of Hughy McCuskers who wins ninety-nine per cent of their battles, sick or well, against all of the renowned cocks of the country; or Mose Poppleton's Ringtail Snorters who defeat all of their opponents by biting of their heads and devouring their bodies. This kid really believes that all that is necessary is to throw a handful of corn and a snowball to a cock once a week and that he can take him out and fight him a dozen times a day and that he must win every time. Thus it is that there are times when the sun shines on both sides of the fence. Why it is that a man will expect to buy a high grade game cock, scientifically bred for a few dollars and know absolutely that in his mind that the purchase price of a high grade wagon is fixed on its actual value, is beyond me. I firmly believe that the great ma

jority of purchasers of game fowl have a fondness for buying something cheap and right there is the secret of all of their troubles. In this business as in any other it is the survival of the fittest. Breeders come and breeders go, strains come and strains go; and yet the constant strife goes on to get the best. Game fowl like everything else are keeping pace with the times. More intelligence each year is being put into the breeding of them, more men are taking up the fancy, more cocks than ever are being fought, the battles are becoming shorter and more deadly, gaffs are being built on absolutely scientific lines, men are discarding fallacies and old fashioned notions and are rapidly coming to understand the true science of conditioning a game cock, not only to get every atom of fight possible out of him, but to enable him to withstand the severest punishment and yet fight back. Through all of this the true game cock is assuming

form and a beauty of plumage almost beyond belief. This is but natural expectation where scientific breeding largely enters in and where men doing the work understand that a certain type of form and carriage give the result sought for in a game cock, even as certain standards are bred to for trotting or running horses. Therefore, the game cock to-day is vastly superior to his forefathers. Some I know will contest this statement, but it cannot be successfully controverted either on paper or in the pit. We are advancing and gradually approaching a perfect pit fowl as to ability to fight, cut and defeat an adversary. As to gameness, this seems to be more of a fixed quality; however, I think there are a greater number of cocks to-day of extreme gameness than ever before in the history of the sport, and this is but the natural outcome of intelligent breeding.

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